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The Path From Trust to Purchase Intention on Social Media Among Vietnamese Consumers

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ABSTRACT

Social media platforms have been developing an increasing number of features for connecting and sharing among users, thereby accelerating communication, promotion, and the trade of goods and services. One of the social media platforms that have achieved remarkable growth in recent years is TikTok Shop. Although users can shop easily on this application, they still have certain doubts stemming from the risks they may encounter. Trust is considered a necessary factor in reducing customer uncertainty and risks in online shopping. This study aims to examine the extent to which perceived values influence trust and online purchase intention among Vietnamese users on the TikTok social media platform. Based on the findings, several managerial implications are proposed for businesses operating on social media in general and on TikTok in particular.

Keywords: Social Media; TikTok; Trust; Purchase Intention.

1.0. Introduction

Global economic and commercial activities are undergoing a significant transformation, both from businesses and consumers. Along with the positive digital transformation, commercial activities on e-commerce platforms, and especially social media, are developing rapidly. The conveniences of e-commerce have clearly changed the behavior of Vietnamese consumers. One social media platform that has achieved remarkable growth in recent years is TikTok Shop. However, in many comments and shares, users still have certain doubts about the products and services sold on this platform. This stems from the risks users may face, such as poor product quality, unstable prices, counterfeit brands, and payment and transaction risks. Therefore, to further increase purchasing activity on social media platforms, ensuring user trust is essential. Accordingly, this article aims to examine the extent to which received values influence the trust and online purchase intentions of Vietnamese users on the social media platform TikTok.

2.0. Theoretical Basis

2.1. Trust in Online Shopping on Social Media

Throughout social development, trust has been considered a crucial factor in promoting relationships and transactions. Trust fosters connection between consumers and sellers and influences other variables in commercial transactions.

The current development of social media has attracted the participation of many businesses, including well-known brands, in promoting and selling their products. Given the characteristics of social media, trust plays a vital role in influencing experiences with products and brands, as there is often a large volume of diverse user comments on products and services offered from various sources.

Trust helps reduce anxiety and boost consumers' online purchase intentions. However, without trust, consumers will be less open to online shopping through social media channels.

2.2. Media Abundance

Media abundance is defined as the ability to convey messages and communicate diverse content through media (Yen, 2020). The level of media abundance is measured based on the number of signals, the immediacy of responses, linguistic diversity, and personalization in the media. Live streaming, advertising, and direct sales allow retailers to showcase and communicate products and services clearly, interactively, and professionally on social media platforms. At the same time, the appearance of influential figures, vivid and colorful images and videos strongly impact user perception, driving the purchase decision process. This sparks curiosity and interest in users, prompting them to search for product options that suit their needs, thereby building trust. Consequently, this leads to the research hypothesis:

H1. The abundance of social media platforms has a positive impact on customer trust when shopping on TikTok.

2.3. Price Fairness

Price fairness refers to a reasonable and acceptable price for products/services, as this is often the first factor considered when making a purchase decision. Perceptions of price are positively related to satisfaction in the purchasing experience, as users often have negative feedback when the value of goods/services received does not match the cost. If customers encounter hidden fees during the purchase process, that is also considered an unfair price (Kaura et al., 2014). With the convenience of social networks, users can easily compare prices from many different sellers, thereby gaining a sense of what price is advantageous to them. When users have price evaluations, they can form trust in sellers who offer reasonable prices. Accordingly, the research hypothesis is:

H2. Fair pricing has a positive impact on customer trust when shopping on TikTok.

2.4. Convenience

Convenience is one of the important factors in motivating users to make online purchases (Lai and Chang, 2011). Shopping on social networks allows users to save time and money thanks to the speed and ease of shopping. In modern life, time is increasingly important to people, so using time wisely is considered a smart way of consuming. Social networks with regularly updated features have helped users conveniently access information and make payment transactions. It can be seen that the level of trust in sellers will increase when they can provide customers with convenience in the purchasing process, not spending too much time and resources in searching for information and building supplier choices. Accordingly, the research hypothesis is set out:

H3. Convenience has a positive impact on the trust of social media users.

2.5. Seller Interaction

Seller interaction refers to interactions that occur during and after the sales process on social media. Sellers can use images of their company's staff or seek partnerships with influential people and trendsetters (KOLs/KOCs) in the communication, advertising, and sales process. Increased interaction can encourage and boost emotions, interest, and trust in users. Sellers who provide more information about their products will help users perceive less risk throughout the purchasing process. Receiving positive interaction from the seller makes customers perceive less

potential risk, thereby increasing trust and forming a positive feeling in users towards the product brand and business. Accordingly, the fourth hypothesis is:

H4. Seller interaction has a positive impact on consumer trust.

2.6. Purchase Intention

Purchase intention is a crucial factor in analyzing and predicting consumer purchasing behavior. The purchase intention of social media users is greatly influenced by comments and shares on these platforms. The duration and frequency of social media use by users today have led them to pay more attention to opinions shared by other users, thereby directly impacting their purchase intention. This shows that purchase intention reflects consumers' choices of products and services based on their considerations or attitudes towards the product, and their high regard for that product/service (Naseri, 2021). The online purchasing process begins with searching, exchanging, and interacting with sellers. In this process, trust is mentioned as an important aspect. Therefore, the research hypothesis is:

H5. Trust has a positive impact on purchase intention on TikTok.

3.0. Research Methodology

3.1. Scale Development

The scales for the variables in the research model were inherited and adjusted with some changes from previous studies related to the research topic. A reverse engineering method was used to ensure the reliability of the scales; subsequently, the scales were consulted by 15 experts, including scientists in the field of e-commerce, sellers on e-commerce platforms (Shopee, Lazada, Tiktok, ...) and several individuals who frequently purchase goods on e-commerce platforms and social networks. Finally, the scales were adjusted to best suit the context in Vietnam.

To increase the suitability and reliability of the scales, a preliminary study was conducted on a small sample, also receiving feedback from several scientists in the field of e-commerce. Based on this sincere feedback, the scales were adjusted to be as appropriate as possible.

Table 1. Scales for the research variables

Variables	Scale
Media Abundance (MR)	PP1: Shopping on TikTok helps me get information quickly. PP2: Shopping on TikTok helps me get reliable information. PP3: Shopping on TikTok helps me get rich information. PP4: Shopping on TikTok provides a wide variety of information such as videos and images.
Fairness of Price (PF)	CB1: I paid a reasonable price for the product I bought on TikTok. CB2: I believe the price on TikTok is reasonable. CB3: I find the price on TikTok acceptable. CB4: I consider the price on TikTok to be ethical.
Convenience in shopping (CO)	TL1: I shop on TikTok whenever I want. TL2: I shop on TikTok without going out.

Seller interaction (HI)	TT1: The seller provided complete and detailed instructions about the goods when shopping on TikTok. TT2: The seller provided additional product information about the ordering and purchasing process through their TikTok account.
Trust (TR)	NT1: Based on my previous experience buying on TikTok, I believe they are honest. NT2: Based on my previous experience buying on TikTok, I believe they keep their promises to customers. NT3: Based on my previous experience buying on TikTok, I believe the seller is not an opportunist. NT4: Based on my previous experience buying on TikTok, I believe the seller is trustworthy.
Purchase intention (INT)	YĐ1: I have a very high chance of buying something on TikTok. YĐ2: My willingness to buy through TikTok is very high. YĐ3: I will consider buying on TikTok in the near future.

3.2. Research Sample

The survey subjects are consumers in Hanoi, a city with one of the highest economic development rates in the country, and a high level of adaptation and modern shopping habits among its residents. Therefore, the research sample was chosen to ensure representativeness of domestic consumers. The survey was conducted from October 2025 to December 2025. The research sample was selected using a random sampling method. Survey questionnaires were sent via links to users' personal messages on Facebook and TikTok accounts. From an initial sample of 500 people, the survey revealed that 441 people had previously made purchases on the social media platform TikTok. A sample questionnaire was used for the survey, and received positive and complete responses from 306 people, achieving a response rate of 61.2%. This sample size ensures the minimum sample size required to guarantee the reliability of the analysis results. The statistical results of the study sample are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Study Sample Statistics

No.	Criteria	Frequency	Ratio
1	**Sex**	**306**	**100**
	Male	132	43.1%
	Female	174	56.9%
2	**Age**	**306**	**100**
	16 - 20	98	32.0%
	21 - 35	115	37.6%
	36 - 45	68	22.2%
	> 45 yrs old	25	8.2%
3	**Income (monthly)**	**306**	**100**
	< 10.000.000đ	58	19.0%
	From 10.000.000đ – 25.000.000đ	102	33.3%
	> 25.000.000đ – 50.000.000đ	84	27.5%
	> 50.000.000đ	62	20.3%
4	**Education**	**306**	**100**
	College	32	10.5%
	Undergraduate	157	51.3%
	Graduate	117	38.2%

Among the 306 respondents, 43.1% were male and 56.9% were female. This reflects the current trend of shopping on the TikTok platform, where women remain the more active participants. The majority of TikTok shoppers are young, aged 35 and under, accounting for 69.6%. Regarding income, 33.3% of respondents earned between 10 million and 25 million VND, followed by those earning less than 50 million VND per month. The majority of survey participants had a university degree or higher.

3.3. Data Processing

To analyze the data, the study used SEM based on partial least squares (PLS) (Hair Jr et al., 2021). Accordingly, the data will be analyzed in two stages: First, a measurement model analysis will be conducted to examine the relationships between latent variables and determine the reliability of the scale, its validity, and its discriminant properties. Second, a structural model analysis will be performed to examine the relationships between variables and test the hypotheses in the research model.

4.0. Results

4.1. Evaluation of the Measurement Model

The evaluation of the measurement model using PLS-SEM was carried out in the following steps: assessing reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity.

To test the reliability of the model, the indicators used included Cronbach's alpha coefficient and composite reliability (CR); outer loadings and extracted variance (AVE). After the first run of outer loadings, the observed variable TR3 reached a value of 0.601, which is smaller than the recommended level of 0.7 (Hair et al., 2019), therefore this observed variable was removed from the research model. The results from Table 3 show that the outer loadings of the scales after the second run were all > 0.7; the Cronbach alpha of the variables ranged from 0.725 to 0.898; The AVE values of all scales are greater than the recommended level of 0.5 by Fornell and Larcker (1981) (ranging from 0.640 to 0.831). Thus, all scales ensure reliability and convergent validity.

Table 3. Out-factor loading coefficients, Cronbach alpha, CR, and AVE

Variable	External load factor	Cronbach alpha	CR	AVE
Convenience in shopping		0.725	0.840	0.640
CO1	0.831			
CO2	0.876			
CO3	0.778			
Awareness of price fairness		0.874	0.914	0.726
FP1	0.839			
FP2	0.890			
FP3	0.843			
FP4	0.834			
Sự tương tác của người bán		0.852	0.901	0.696
HI1	0.873			
HI2	0.880			
HI3	0.851			
HI4	0.723			

Purchase intent in Tiktok		0.898	0.936	0.831
INT1	0.910			
INT2	0.914			
INT3	0.911			
Media abundance		0.883	0.914	0.680
MR1	0.788			
MR2	0.843			
MR3	0.854			
MR4	0.80			
MR5	0.838			
Trust		0.857	0.903	0.700
TR1	0.843			
TR2	0.867			
TR4	0.825			
TR5	0.811			

Source: Results processed from SmartPLS 4.

To test the discriminant validity of the variables in the research model, the Discriminant Validity Coefficient (HTMT) was used. Accordingly, discriminant validity is established between constructs when the HTMT coefficient is lower than 0.9 or less than 0.85. The results from Table 4 show that all scales in the research model have coefficients < 0.85, thus ensuring discriminant validity.

Table 4. HTMT Coefficient

	FP	**MR**	**CO**	**HI**	**INT**
FP					
TR	0.688				
MR	0.536				
CO	0.764	0.631			
HI	0.686	0.661	0.749		
INT	0.580	0.567	0.653	0.565	

Source: results from SmartPLS 4.

4.2. Structural Model Evaluation

The structural model evaluation was performed using the Bootstrap technique with a magnification factor of 5000 samples and a significance level of 5%. The steps in evaluating the structural model included: multicollinearity testing (VIF), coefficient of determination (R2), and hypothesis testing.

* Multicollinearity testing and coefficient of determination of the model:

The results from Table 5 show that the VIF values of the scales in the model are in the range of 1.000 – 2.043, which is less than level 5 as suggested by Hair Jr & ctg. (2021), therefore the model does not suffer from multicollinearity.

Table 5. VIF coefficient and coefficient of determination of the model (R2)

FP	**TR**	**MR**	**CO**	**HI**	**INT**	**Hệ số R^2**	**R^2 hiệu chỉnh**
FP	1.849						
MR	1.625						

CO	1.963				
HI	2.043				
TR			1.000	0.650	0.641
INT				0.424	0.420

Source: Results processed from SmartPLS 4.

The R2 coefficient explains the degree to which the variance of the endogenous variable is explained by the exogenous variable. In which, R^2 above 0.4 indicates a large effect, in the range (0.25 – 0.4) indicates a medium effect, and less than 0.1 indicates a weak effect. Table 5 reports the adjusted R2 coefficients of the confidence (TR) and purchase intention (INT) variables, reaching values of 0.641 and 0.420 respectively, corresponding to the high effect of the four (04) independent variables; at the same time, the confidence variable explains 42.0% of the variation of the purchase intention variable on TikTok.

* Hypothesis Testing:

The results of the hypothesis testing (Table 6) show that the factor of media abundance has a positive influence on customer trust (β = 0.282; P = 0.000), therefore hypothesis H1 is accepted. However, hypothesis H2 regarding the positive impact of perceived price fairness on customer trust is not supported due to the P value = 0.069 > 0.05 and the opposite confidence interval. Hypothesis H3 regarding the relationship between shopping convenience and customer trust is confirmed in this study (β = 0.306; P = 0.000). In addition, hypothesis H4 regarding the predictive role of seller interaction on customer trust is accepted with β = 0.270 and P = 0.001. Finally, the hypothesis of a positive relationship between customer trust and purchase intention on TikTok is supported (β = 0.651; P = 0.000).

Table 6. Results of hypothesis testing

Giả thuyết	**Hệ số đường dẫn (β)**	**Độ lệch chuẩn**	**Giá trị T**	**Giá trị P**	**Khoảng tin cậy (CI)**		**Kết quả**
					LL	**UL**	
H1: MR -> TR	0.282	0.071	3.961	0.000	0.138	0.42	Chấp nhận
H2: FP -> TR	0.116	0.064	1.821	***0.069***	***-0.017***	***0.236***	Từ chối
H3: CO -> TR	0.306	0.073	4.212	0.000	0.154	0.44	Chấp nhận
H4: HI -> TR	0.270	0.084	3.199	0.001	0.114	0.441	Chấp nhận
H5: TR -> INT	0.651	0.078	8.352	0.000	0.466	0.772	Chấp nhận

Source: Processing results from SmartPLS 4

5.0. Recommendations

The study has identified several important results. The conclusions in the study show that the richness of media, convenience in shopping, and seller interaction are important factors affecting consumer trust during the shopping process on social media platforms, specifically TikTok. Perceived price fairness was not statistically significant in the study, indicating no significant impact on user trust.

Among the factors affecting user trust on TikTok, convenience in shopping is the most positive and significant factor. During the shopping process, any user can use electronic devices to search for information, consult, and ask for opinions from the community, thereby comparing and evaluating products, services, and providers.

Research has shown a clear influence of user trust on their purchase intentions. When users perceive factors such as convenience, media abundance, and seller interaction, they tend to form trust and gradually eliminate doubts. With

the current sales policies of social media platforms in general and TikTok in particular, users have more confidence in product providers, thereby forming more positive purchase intentions.

From a practical perspective, the research results suggest several implications for businesses operating on social media in general and TikTok in particular:

- First, sellers need to understand the factors affecting user trust and purchase intentions, as well as how users can optimally consider these factors in their needs. Therefore, sellers need to prioritize building trust with users, thereby further encouraging purchase intent and decision-making. Businesses providing products need to provide more complete and clear product specifications during product communication so that users can analyze and evaluate the value received.

- Sellers need to optimize the presentation in video content, as well as the purchasing process on their TikTok account. This provides a simpler and more convenient experience for users in tracking and evaluating products and services. TikTok's current features allow sellers to easily connect with other information channels such as Facebook, Instagram, or Zalo. Accordingly, users can access multiple accounts of the seller to find more useful information from comments and shares of other users. Therefore, sellers need to optimize this feature on their accounts, as well as create consistency in content and messaging across platforms.

- To further optimize the richness of communication, sellers need to build content tailored to the TikTok platform. Brands that create distinctive videos have been proven to achieve high effectiveness in marketing communication, increasing user interaction. Therefore, sellers need to optimally utilize TikTok's unique styles such as camera angles and creative tools (duet, green screen, text) to create a natural and seamless look on the platform. TikTok's "trends" also need to be noticed and effectively exploited by businesses because users enjoy it when brands adopt trends, memes, or challenges. This requires businesses to identify trends, analyze the relevance of their brand/product to those trends, and build videos using a three-part structure (bait, main content, and call to action). Businesses also need to pay special attention to video editing techniques to increase user interest, attention, and memorability of their products, services, and brand. Techniques to consider include aspects such as music, transition effects, motion effects, text, emojis, and branding elements. In addition, businesses can also refer to and collaborate with influential accounts on TikTok that track consumer trends.

- Businesses selling on TikTok can increase their interaction with users by researching and monitoring the time users spend most actively on TikTok. This ensures that marketing content reaches users as early as possible. At the same time, sellers need to interact more with the TikTok community by participating in relevant challenges and hashtags. Commenting, following, and interacting with other accounts can also help build relationships and create rapport. Businesses need to monitor and respond to comments on videos on their personal accounts to create a connection and positive interaction with viewers.

The research results showed some successes, but there were still some limitations. First, the research sample was obtained through an online survey via a link, so some participants' responses may have certain discrepancies with their actual experiences due to possible distractions during the reading and answering of the questions. Second, the

proposed model of the study did not include all perceived values that could impact the trust of TikTok users. The author attempted to focus on analyzing the main components of purchasing activity on TikTok based on previous studies. Therefore, further research could expand to include other factors influencing trust in the impact of purchase intentions on TikTok.

Declarations

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Competing Interests Statement

The author has not declared any conflict of interest.

Consent for publication

The author declares that he consented to the publication of this study.

Consent for participate

The participants in this study voluntarily gave their informed consent before their involvement in the research.

Author's Contribution

The author took part in literature review, analysis, and manuscript writing.

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